



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).



BULLETIN  
OF THE  
AMERICAN GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY.

---

**Vol. XXVII**

**1895.**

**No. 1**

---

KOREA AND THE KOREANS: IN THE MIRROR OF THEIR  
LANGUAGE AND HISTORY.

A LECTURE BY

WM. ELLIOT GRIFFIS, D.D.

(Author of "Korea, the Hermit Nation.")

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: The lecture on Korea and the Koreans, to which you are to listen this evening, is not a narrative of personal adventure. Let me at once state the fact that I have never, on foot or horse, in flesh and blood, been inside the boundaries of the Peninsular Kingdom. My explorations have been in the history, language and art of this people and country, which stand between China and Japan, supplying the link of relationship in the chain of "the three countries." What I tell you to-night consists of the answers which I have received in talking to living Koreans in the United States and Japan, and even more by inquiring of those who have been dead ages or decades ago. Most of my notes have been taken while exploring that great treasure house of thought, that gallery of photographs of mind which has been slowly formed in the evolution of the centuries,—the Korean language.

Doubtless this confession will be a source of disappointment to some of you. Yet, when I read the latest books on Korea and the Koreans and articles just damp from the press, and when I peruse the letters of visitors to or correspondents living in Seoul, and find so little of real information, I am not so much dissatisfied with my own method of inquiry. When I see in the tourists' publications pictures made by and bought from the native artists, which the foreigner does not at all understand, I feel that his text is far below the pictures, and that old records and word-photographs are not to be despised. The tourist and traveller, on foot

or pony's back, gives his *impressions*, but these do not and cannot explain the people or their life, or show, for example, the causes of the singular political and moral weakness of the Koreans, who are physically among the finest peoples in Eastern Asia. To the passing visitor, also, the national art, religion, beliefs and literature, are as sealed scrolls. What astonishes me in the new books and letters from Korea (for the scholar and long resident has not yet written) is the vast amount of darkness that still enswathes the tiny lanterns which the travellers seem to carry. Nevertheless, let us be thankful for such light as we can get.

When, however, we question the ancient and mediæval records, when we hold up the mirror of language, when we study Korean art, we see how one explains the other, and each throws light on all. Though we may never have lived in the land of clean clothes and filthy habits, or walked in the undrained streets, or stumbled along the alleged roads, we may get, within certain limits, a few clear ideas about Korea and the Koreans. Such ideas as I have obtained you will allow me to present before you this evening, to be further illustrated by the stereopticon pictures made from photographs taken on the soil, or from genuine objects of native art.

As in married life, when one man and one woman have lived together in love and harmony during many years, they come to look like each other, so a people long dwelling upon the soil of a country resemble in temperament and character the land they inhabit. In a true marriage between country and people there grows up a likeness, and there is found a subtle harmony which is not easily disturbed. So true is this, that it is next to impossible for a new man from Christendom to penetrate the motives or forecast the action of the eastern Asiatics. Captain Sherard Osborn, R. N., when asked what a Chinaman would do in a certain case, answered: "Make up your mind as to how an Englishman might act under the circumstances, and then consider that a Chinaman would do exactly the opposite." Whether we are willing to acknowledge it or not, climate, soil, air, food, and all natural influences combining with hereditary bias, make the man what he is in spite of himself at the moment. It is only when the impact of ideas from without is further re-enforced by powerful mental initiative and a determined will that the old crust of ideas and routine is upheaved and broken through. Something like this has already happened in Japan; something like this (while we are waiting to see it fully manifested) has probably already begun in Korea.

This marriage between people and country and the subtle likeness and harmony thereby produced are manifest at once in the case of the Hebrews and Palestine; in that of the Arabs in the deserts or cities; as between the Dutch and their dyke-land; and in the instance of Japan and her people. The student of the languages and history of these peoples feels this harmony of nature and man as keenly as does the lover of music when skilful player and well-attuned instrument come together.

In no country, more than in Korea, is the image of the character of the people in the mirror of their language and history more clear. The great landmarks of nature are reflected in the national temperament with a sharpness of outline like that of mountain peaks upon the unruffled surface of the lake within the crater-bosom. A study of that language in its details enables us to read therein the main features of Korean history. Even had we not the literary records before us, we could construct in bold outlines and in rich coloring the national story. Furthermore, a knowledge of history gives the key to art. A survey of the records explains in great measure the awful poverty of the people, their backwardness in civilization, and the fact, which to my mind seems undoubted, that the Korea of to-day is a retrogression from the Korea of the Middle Ages, and that her civilization was greater a semi-millennium ago than in the year 1894. In this latter year, the Old Korea of isolation, degradation and hermit-like seclusion, passed away, while the New Korea of independence, nobler development, and a world-touching national life began A. D. 1895.

Looking into the mirror of language as read not only in the literature, so far as we know it, but especially in the geographical names, in the proverbs and idioms of the people, and in the rich vocabulary of the language, as set forth by Japanese, French, English and American scholars, we see looming up the great political influences, the natural landmarks, the creatures of earth, air and water, and the invisible influences which shape belief. We see that in origin the people of this peninsula are made up of many races, which in the early and unwritten ages struggled for mastery. Here is the picture which language gives: men out of the north, living under feudal forms of government in the great plains and valleys of Manchuria, gradually move southward. They have in these early eras very much the same domestic animals that are found to-day south of the Ever White Mountains. The pig, besides being a favorite source of food, furnishes also the material for cosmetics. The horse is rather a pony, reminding one more of a

Newfoundland dog than a Normandy beast of draught. The serpent is a creature both honoured and worshipped. The tiger is the great enemy, mightily influential both in reality and in imagination, but also the educator of man in valour and vigilance. The love of dancing, music and hilarity is strong. Etiquette, rude though it be, is as important for the dead as for the living. Banners, bells and gongs please the eye and ear.

Then rises the vast looming shadow of China. Toward the setting sun is a great and mighty Power,—a State in which there are not only cities and cultivated farms, the riches of a long civilization, but books and learning. There are also mighty men of culture, and their intellectual keenness and penetration surprise the rude people among whom, as trader, voyager, colonist, or political master, the Chinaman comes. At some time in the remote past (the Koreans and Chinese both claiming the date to be as early as 1122 B. C.) one of the ancestors of Confucius, Ki-shi, comes into a region which included within its sphere of influence a portion of what is now northern Korea, and thus the people were brought into direct contact with Chinese letters and civilization. Although the modern critical student refuses to accept as real history the traditions which the Koreans possess of this alleged founder of their social order, yet it is interesting to find throughout the region of Ping Yang, in the land-measures, in the customs of daily life, in the impress upon common speech, upon geographical names, and above all in the graven stone tablets, so many memorials of this Ki-Shi.

Twice the Chinese overran Korea and made conquest of the region north of the Ta-Tong River and west of the great mountain range. In the second century B. C., and again in the seventh century they conquered the region at this moment occupied by the Japanese armies and also the northwestern part of the Korean peninsula. From this latter century Chinese influence has been predominant throughout the north, especially, but also over the whole country. Roughly speaking, we may say that the northern half of Korea is in its language, ideas and procedure, strongly leavened with the Chinese civilization. Throughout all the national history there has been a strong element, often taking form in what might be called a political party, that has ever sought to cultivate the closest relations with the Middle Kingdom. The influence of China during the Tang and Sung dynastic eras was so close and powerful, that its impress on the native speech, language, literature and art of Korea is manifest at a glance.

On the other hand, there has always been in Korean politics a tendency toward more or less complete independence,—political, social and even literary. Roughly speaking, southern Korea is Japanese, or at least far more Japanese than Chinese in language, ideas and procedure; for the relations between the peninsula and the archipelago have been very close. Though sober criticism does not allow that the Japanese, in any true sense of the word, ever conquered all Korea, though research shrivels up into Lilliputian proportions the Brobdignagian story of the “conquest of Korea” by the Amazonian Empress, Jingu, yet it is evident that in the early Christian ages, if not before, the Japan Islands were peopled largely by a race of Asiatic highlanders who came from various parts of the Korean peninsula. Beside a very liberal amount of fighting at home among themselves, these islanders and peninsulars both enjoyed a good deal of warfare against each other on both land and water.

Exactly what a “pirate” is, or rather was, is not laid down in either the written or unwritten law of ancient times; but it is certain that the Japanese raid into Korea partook more of the nature of piracy than of devotion to science, or missionary zeal. Throughout the early centuries there was a pretty constant succession of expeditions from Japan into the peninsula, very much like those which are so frequent in the early history of Britain, when the Danes, Frisians, and that miscellaneous mass of Low Dutch people called “Anglo-Saxons” landed in England. Nevertheless the Japanese never overran Korea, or held the whole country, except once, and then only for a few months, in the great invasions of 1592–1597. Forced to retire southward before the combined armies of China and Korea, they remained for many months at points near the sea-coast, leaving their mark especially in the southern provinces. When finally they departed, they seem to have scooped the country clean of its art, its movable riches, and in general of its skilled artisans. While the Japanese thus left Korea blasted and barren, they enriched themselves and entered upon that splendid development of artistic and literary culture, which, after two and one-half centuries of assiduous care within, as it were, a walled garden, has burst into the full flower which surprises the world. After the Japanese came the Manchus, and poor Korea, made poorer and ground under an abominable system of government, has been a pauper among nations and the prey of at least two of them.

The mirror of language reflects in large proportion these constant political influences, the major from China, the minor from Japan.

History also tells us that beside these nationalities, various tribes and people out of the periodically-overflowing plains of Manchuria, and once the great hordes of the Mongols from the far north-west penetrated the peninsula, leaving more or less deposit of ideas and blood. Even the Arabs came and traded at the Korean ports. During the Japanese invasion, Portuguese also entered the country. In the seventeenth century two companies of Dutchmen, shipwrecked on the shores, lived inside of the peninsula during many years. From time to time the flotsam and drift from many lands found a lodgment on Korean shores. It is very certain that in this once hermit nation there is a mixture of many bloods. Almost every traveller has called attention to what I noticed immediately when meeting the Koreans who came to ratify the first treaty,—that there are several distinct ethnic types. Besides the dark-skinned labourers with “pudding faces” of uncultured aboriginal stock, the high-cheeked Manchu face, the round, plump features of the Chinese in the centre and north, and the figures and countenances closely resembling the Japanese in the south, the traveller is surprised at seeing faces of a pronounced Caucasian type. The thought of Aryan or at least Indian intermixture is more than a suggestion, when the undoubted affinities between the Dravidian languages of southern India and the speech of Korea are remembered. While there is a large Chinese vocabulary (which, however, does not affect the syntax of the language), and while in structure, the Korean and Japanese are so much alike, as to suggest twin brothers that were once hardly distinguishable infants lying in the same cradle, yet this subtle resemblance between the ancient languages of India and the speech of Korea is more than accident.

The Korean language, in its vocabulary and idioms once exotic but now part of the garden of daily speech, and in a phraseology that is varied and striking, bears witness also to the great religious and civilizing influences that came in with Buddhism. This great civilizer advanced by a double path from both Tibet and China; it came also at different times and in various forms. The earliest missionaries brought the rudiments of simple Buddhism in the literary and doctrinal forms of what is called the Smaller Vehicle. History tells us this was as early as the fourth century. But from the seventh to the fourteenth centuries we can trace the importations of new fashions in doctrine, ritual and Buddhistic literature, which show also that the Koreans came to enjoy the grander outlook and the more fascinating splendours of the Larger Vehicle, with its brilliancy of imagination and captivating rhetoric.



Roughly outlining the history of the imported Indian faith, we may say that from the fourth until about the eleventh century, there was the missionary age of Korean Buddhism. Then, from that time until the end of the fourteenth century, we have its golden age of success, prosperity and mighty power. This is the era of mighty monasteries and nunneries, of splendid temples, when Sanskrit was studied; when more or less native literature was produced; when the living rock in mountain and boulder was sculptured into the forms of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and saints; and when a knowledge of Buddhism penetrated even to the common people. For, one of the grandest inventions ever achieved in Korea was that of a true vernacular alphabet, one of the most perfect in the world, and founded not only on thoroughly rational but on accurately phonetic and linguistic principles. This alphabet of twenty-five letters—eleven vowels and fourteen consonants—enabled even the common people to read and write; while from Korea into Japan flowed a constant stream of missionary and civilizing influences. In Japanese Buddhistic literature, Korea is “the Treasure-Land of the West.”

In these halcyon days of Korean Buddhism pilgrims went clear beyond the Himalayas to visit the holy land of the faith and to bring back sutras, images and relics; while, on the other hand, pious pilgrims from India, “the land nearest Heaven,” were received in great state at Sunto, which was then the Korean capital. Then, the site of the present Seoul contained, indeed, a city; yet not of lay dwellings, but of monasteries and nunneries, where thousands of monks daily chanted the sacred sutras and shastras. This capital of mediæval Korean Buddhism had, as documents say, a “myriad and nine” temples. There still stands, solitary and un-honoured, in Seoul, a white marble pagoda, once richly sculptured, now defaced, and rising from surroundings of squalor. It is the eloquent witness to the scholar of the bygone days of a once national religion. The most striking monuments of art and of the old religion are the *mir-yeks* or “stone men.” Throughout the country, sometimes rising out of a plain in a mass of white granite that reminds one of a lighthouse; sometimes at the edge or on the spur of a mountain range, lichen and mossy with centuries of neglect; sometimes found even in forests and claiming kindred of oblivion with the giant trees that for centuries have not felt the axeman’s touch, are the colossal sculptured figures of Buddha. These images, which, though occasionally in pairs and representing the dual, or male and female principles which Chinese philosophy sees

dominating the universe, were reared by Buddhists. The most ancient or male image is that of the Maitreya or Messiah Buddha—the Buddha to come. The second or female figure has been, in each case, probably added much later, after the prevalence of Confucianism. By and bye Buddhism, instead of being, as at first, an aggressive missionary force, resolutely conquering its way by faith and sacrifice, lifting up a light to guide and inspire, and becoming the Salvation Army for the lowly and the ignorant, waxed fat and gross with kingly favor and royal patronage. Then its decay began. It was already dead, of atrophy of the intellect and fatty degeneration of the heart, even before the sword of the soldier, to the charge of treason, added decapitation. Buddhism was, as a system, in 1392, not only disestablished but it utterly waned as an intellectual and moral power. Seoul, the city of monasteries, was obliterated as such and made the royal residence and capital. It is less “the Paris” than the Hague of Korea, since the name means literally, the hedge or palisade. The priests were prohibited from entering walled cities and were reduced to a sort of clerical militia, who held their monasteries and garrisoned fortresses at the king's pleasure. Their very existence depended upon their subservience and cringing obedience.

Nevertheless it must not be forgotten that the awful poverty and devastation which Buddhism in the peninsula to-day shows, was in considerable measure the result of the Japanese torch and hammer. For to the war of 1592–97 there was added not only the bitterness of the hostile invader, but also the iconoclastic bigotry of the Japanese Christians who so numerous composed the invading army and took their cue from friars who looked to Philip II. of Spain as a shining Christian example. Steeped in ignorance and cut off from all vitalizing touch with their fellow-religionists, the priests of Korean Buddhism have sunk to the lowest degree of what may, in a strain of exaggeration, be called religion.

The average Korean's religiosity is one that is made up of a mixture of the Confucian ethics, the dregs of Buddhism, and, more than either, the indigenous demonolatry. Fetichism, with its charms, amulets and spells, rules from the palace to the rice field. Shamanism, with its crowds of geomancers, horoscopists, fortune-tellers, locators and removers of tombs, and answerers of questions to the gullible, is omnipresent and rampant. Even their distance-posts or boundary-figures are carved into grotesque resemblances to the human face and head, with probably a Shamanistic reference to the land spirits. From the Ever-White

mountain to the island of Quelpart, the poor superstitious people are constantly under the tyranny of those who pretend to propitiate the spirits of earth, air and water, and the myriads of invisible beings that jostle each other in their chronic determination to work harm to mortals. In no country is there a larger menagerie of mythical zoölogy. In the region of water beneath there is every sort of dragon and of malevolent, slimy or scaly creatures such as no naturalist has ever yet captured for his museum. Besides the tiger, the serpent and the various specimens of hoofed, horned, clawed, beaked and winged creatures of reality, there is every imaginable specimen of mythical composite. The scars on the Korean imagination are long and deep. The student is constantly reminded of the oriental proverb, "Blow away the hair and you find a gash." The missionary, with his belief in one true God, must rout these hosts of darkness; but the man of science must be his companion and aid. Already in Japan the church and the school-house have perceptibly removed the incubi and driven off the nightmares. What Korea wants is the same light and truth which, in place of the *delirium tremens* of Paganism, will bring health, wealth, strength and soberness.

Dominant through all the ages, since its first introduction in the early Christian centuries, has been the Chinese ethical system. This furnishes the Korean with his daily rules of conduct. It is interesting to note the philosophical and doctrinal evolutions of Confucianism. In Korea, as well as in its old home, China, and in Japan, Confucianism was first a simple system of ethics built upon the etiquette of the ancestral sacrifices; but, as cogitated and manipulated by the Chinese schoolmen of the Middle Ages, it became a remarkable philosophical system, in some phases agnostic, but in its general trend pantheistic. In Japan, Confucianism has had remarkable local developments and adaptations, which have changed it at some points very strikingly as compared with the Chinese norm and forms. In Korea this system of ethics and metaphysics has been developed noticeably by critical students and commentators, so that it is among certain learned classes, "a pantheistic medley"; but with the Koreans generally it may be said that Confucianism, besides furnishing ethics and philosophy and a substitute for religion, as we understand it, has become a system of political economy. It may be safely said that though differing widely in both method and object, the struggles, during the past decade, of the anti-Japanese and anti-progressive party of the Min clan at court, and those of the Tong Hak (Eastern Culture)

rebels in the south, are based on the same ideas. The former sought to get and keep all political power, office and spoils. The self-styled Tong-Haks, or Eastern Civilization Party of insurgents, whose uprising (through the necessity of military force to subdue it) brought on the present war, believe in the old order of things. Both the Min nobles and the Tong-Hak peasants are ultra-Confucianists, who have sought to prevent the modernization of Korea by a fresh assertion of the Chinese ethical system as they understand it.

These importations of religion and of political influences from Japan and China have been as so many new horizons widening the Korean vision and giving it new range. Yet besides things political and religious, let us glance at some of the great elements in social and material progress which language and history reveal. It was a great gift to human comfort when cotton was introduced into the peninsula, furnishing a new material for dress and even for the armor of the soldier. Thus far, the Koreans have preferred to wear the woven material in its undyed form. The unique spectacle is presented of a whole nation dressed in white, and of people looking as though night had been turned into day and somnambulists had not yet exchanged their sleeping clothes for the garb of work and of outdoors. This bleached costume is but an index of the attitude of the people at large who are still asleep or in dreams, while all around them the world has awakened. Even the Chinaman who visits the streets of Seoul sees in the fashions of dressing both the hair and the body the mirror of customs long abandoned in China.

Less certain in its benefits to the Korean people was the introduction of tobacco, through the Portuguese, Spaniards and Japanese of the sixteenth century. To the habitual and temperate user of tobacco, no doubt, any world which knew not the soothing influence of this weed, must have been a dark one; and to the holder of such a creed the advent of tobacco seems like the discovery of a new continent of physical pleasure. However this may be (the lecturer being personally heterodox on this subject) the Korean eschewing, but not chewing, the leaf in its solid form, nor inhaling it in powder, clings to the use of the weed in the pipe alone. As in his own dwelling he builds a *kang* or system of flues extending laterally from end to end, having a furnace at one end and a chimney at the other, through which smoke and heat pass, so the male human being makes a *kang* of himself. About four feet from his mouth he builds a tiny brass furnace which he charges with fuel

from the tobacco plant. At the other end, he pulls most industriously in order to make a draft, using his mouth and nose as bellows and chimney. The quantity of tobacco which the average male will get through with is prodigious. The favorite attitude of the smoker is the squat, his face having a peculiarly vacant expression during his absorption in this Nirvana of smoke. Furthermore, his teeth which are usually strong and white are made the machinery by which he supports the weight of the long cane stem, tipped as it sometimes is with jade. When not making a chimney of himself, he thrusts his pipe down his back behind the collar; or, if he is a soldier, he uses his Remington, Winchester or fire-lock for a pipe case.

The Korean dress has no pocket in it, neither has it any buttons inside or out. It is kept together with strings or by the mere force of gravity. Whatever receptacles may equip the person, for the keeping of official commissions, seals, the provender for smoke, tools, money, or what not, are in the form of bags suspended from the waist. While outwardly, the clothes may be white, in the case of the upper classes, and of an uncertain tint which hovers around or approaches gray, in that of the lower classes, inwardly the Korean is not quite as "all glorious" as the king's daughter. The Korean language, to say nothing of reality, suggests neither soap nor lye, nor is there a simple word, as in Japanese, meaning hot water or bath tub. Cynics say that the Korean is washed only twice in his life,—when he is new born and when he is a corpse, but this is probably a foreigner's exaggeration. Nevertheless it is to be wished that in a country so liberally provided with animal and vegetable fat as is Korea, the soap factory may soon be a permanent institution. Very probably when godliness becomes more common, its next door neighbor, cleanliness, will not be absent. It is certain that one of the new horizons needed by these people, so long hermits from the world, is the conception of the benefits and value both of physical and moral purity. The language itself, apart from what missionaries and long residents tell us, shows the awful prevalence of horrible diseases, which can be and ought to be checked and controlled, and explains why Korean families are so small and why the awful mortality among infants is so great. In a word, language, history, and the multiplying reports of eye-witnesses all agree that Korea and the Koreans present to-day a picture similar to that of Old and unreformed Japan prior to the coming of the forces of western civilization and Christianity. The tremendous manifestation of energy in that re-birth of modern

Japan, which dates from 1868, is, let us hope, the prototype of the Korea to come. Despite her long humiliation and hermit life, the fact must not be forgotten that this people gave Japan much of her civilization. Furthermore, Korea is the only nation in the Far East that has produced a true alphabet. More glorious than all, Korea is the home of true printing, the place of the invention of movable types. Long before Gutenberg or Coster the Koreans printed books with separate and distributed type made of copper. Probably the Mongols brought this Korean invention into Europe.

We might dwell further upon those reflections in the mirror of language and history which show how the mountains, the rivers, and the ocean have influenced the Korean imagination and moulded history and life. We could illustrate, with proverb and idiom, the part which the tiger and leopard on land, and the monsters of the water, have played in stimulating and developing the Korean man, his rhetoric and his art.

It would be easy to show especially how the language reveals the lack of personality in Korean. In common with his brethren of all that part of Asia dominated by Chinese culture, the Korean suffers from deficiency of self-revelation and consciousness. He has not reached the stage of intellectual development in which he is able to draw a clear line between mind and matter, Creator and creation, the living being and the inanimate object. He does not personify, he has very little metaphor. He knows little of that gorgeous imagery and the profuse and extravagant tropical language, which we associate with the word "Oriental," and accurate with the paradoxical *western* Orient. Like the Chinese, the Korean's language and literature are intensely matter-of-fact. The best of his literature, even his poetry, is descriptive; his written history consists almost entirely of annals; there is hardly any such thing as portrait painting and no sculpture which can compare with that of any European nation. This impersonality of conception which has so feeble a grasp of the distinction between mind and matter, or between the individual and the multitude, is manifested in every department and product of the national intellect. In grammar there are no pronouns, but an amazing number of honorific words, while so little formal logic is exhibited in the language that one could write a book as big as Macaulay's "History of England" or Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" *in one sentence*,—so many and so necessary are the Korean conjunctions. In a word, here is a country and people where mental initiative was long ago practically lost, where originality was

swamped by too slavish dependence upon China, where the original poverty of mind and dearth of ideas has been almost petrified, so that to-day the Koreans are a people intellectually comatose and morally semi-paralyzed.

Yet in such opinions and judgments we must not go to an unreasonable extreme, and especially must the American take lesson and warning from the average British tourist, book-maker and politician. There is a wonderful family likeness about English books on Korea; for, to the man to whom "British Interests" is a religion, the only orthodoxy concerning Korea is that she is hopelessly corrupt and can only save herself by adhering to China, which is, after all, only a British opium-shop and a place for the sale of Manchester shirtings, and possibly a scrap of the earth which at some future time will, like India, become a part of the British Empire.

The American, however, sees differently. From the first, both the individual and the United States Government have believed that there is hope for Korea, and that she is and ought of right to be, independent. Neither American missionary, traveller, diplomatist nor statesman, believes that the case of the peninsular kingdom is hopeless; but, that even as Japan saved herself through American influence from becoming an India and seems able to work out her own salvation, so, measurably at least, despite her unfortunate geographical situation and interior limitations, Korea can live and thrive by working out her national genius and destiny. Her age alone demands respect. The benefits which she has conferred in past ages upon Japan deserve recognition beyond that of mere sentiment. Furthermore, the actual facts of recent years seem to point as surely to Korea's ability to win and hold an independent place in the world's history, as surely as the shadows of the sunset point toward the sun rising. Let us see.

Unquestionable as has been the awakening influence upon Korea of the march of events in great China, yet we have reason to believe that even more influential in stimulating to new life has been the advent of the Americans in what is England's "far east" and our "far west." When, in 1853, Perry's Armada of western civilization mirrored the stars and stripes on the waters of Yedo Bay, that peaceful evening gun fired from the *Mississippi's* deck at nine o'clock of July 7th, 1853, was the requiem of Old Japan. The hail and welcome from the sunrise gun of July 8th, was a salute to the rising sun of New Japan. The firing of that unshotted Columbiad, symbol of America's peaceful conquest of Japan, by

means of the missionary, teacher, engineer and adviser, was also heard in the hermit peninsula. Five years later, a victory even grander than Perry's was achieved by Townsend Harris, when the once hermit country was opened to foreign trade and residence. Then began that ferment of ideas and quickening of movement which in fifteen years made feudalism a dream and opened the fresh morning of the long bright day of New Japan.

This splendor in the near east dazzled also the watchers on the high peaks of Korean observation. For, while in the Hermit Land of Chō-sen the mass of humanity was like the traveller amid snow and glaciers, who half blinded and frozen has yielded to the sleepy delight of insensibility and approaching death, yet there were, as in Old Japan, a few inquiring spirits earnestly awaiting and looking for signs of the dawn. These Koreans loved their country with a fierceness of patriotism that, besides having in it elements of selfish greed, would stop at nothing congenial to their code of morals, whether assassination, palace-seizure, or abundant bloodshed, to carry out their ideas. As no stream rises higher than its fountain, it would be idle to expect that the regeneration of a nation steeped in moral corruption could proceed in angelic or saintly ways, or without those bloody revolutions which are so common even in the history of Christendom. Nevertheless, with all their faults, which are many and great, we believe that those who in 1884 tried, by such means as they were familiar with in their own history, to awaken their country and people to new life, were noble patriots, ranking, in motive at least, as high as the highest in Korean history. Knowing that while anciently there were many civilizations, but in these days of the world-nerves of steam, electricity and international law, there is but one, they determined at all hazards to have in Korea that one civilization.

So, while Japan was entering upon that career which has surprised the world (and which Americans recognized and welcomed as genuine, even before the Murata rifle had pierced the shell of Chinese conceit), two or three Korean young men were opening their hearts to each other concerning their country. They took long walks in the country, beyond those city walls which have ears, and safe from the spy lodged in floor or ceiling or with eyes glued to the keyhole. They discussed what should be done to save their country. One of them, Kim Ok Kiun, "violated the frontier" and crossed the seas to Japan. There, he saw an old world becoming a new one. He himself tried the virtues of leather boots and cloth trousers. He parted with his topknot



though only after tears and grief. He learned the comfort of felt hats, woollen underclothing and linen shirts, and thus found what good working clothes, with all their ugliness, those of the West are. He wore a watch and learned the preciousness of time. He saw the fairy-land of modern applied science and how the western men had tamed the dragon of steam and made wings of electricity, in a way that put to shame even the mythology of his native land. Coming back home he told others. Soon in Japan there were other hermits in the world's market-place. Little companies of Peninsulars got themselves inoculated with the anti-toxine of semi-European Japan, so as to be proof against further attacks of the Chinese virus or diseases; while all the time they were undergoing a kind of new birth that made them another sort of men. Their whole world of view was different. One of them was a noble of highest rank and of royal blood, and he, coming back to Seoul, was the first to boldly penetrate the king's presence and told him what he had seen in the new world beyond the sea.

What a story was that! to compare Old and New Japan, and study results was enough to make the head of a Korean king swim. Korea was a country eaten up with parasites. One-tenth of the population lived on the other nine-tenths. A great mass of lazy, non-tax paying, non-producing gentry called "Yang-ban" (civil and military), wanted to keep things as they were; that is, to let disease, ignorance, poverty and oppression run riot. They would prevent any motive in the laborer or farmer or trader to gain wealth or get comfort, let superstition run riot; keep out light and knowledge and press down and hold down the people under the awful incubus of Confucianism and the Chinese system, which meant permanent paralysis and ultimate national death through foreign conquest. Even more clearly than a Christian or a Hebrew, they understood the prophecy of the civilization of to-day, though they may never have read it,—“The nation that shall not serve shall perish.”

What a grand story that princely traveller from Japan told; of a multitude of jealous sections and principalities, once held to the semblance of order by a military despotism, now transformed into a united country, full of willing hearts and working hands; of a national army, navy, postal, educational, and light-house system; of horrible and destructive diseases, mastered, and held under the firm hand of science; of monopoly and privilege broken down; of the old classes of gentry now reduced to the rank of producers, and, instead of receiving stipends from the government treasury,

paying taxes and tolls; the army and military promotion open to every boy in the land; a system of public schools that, besides being open to every child in the country, added to their own native light the splendor of western knowledge; the land put practically into the hands of the actual cultivators; the courts open to all; the forces of the universe chained, harnessed and obeyed; the old barbarous customs of both peace and war, the exposure and murder of infants, the abominations and brutalities, inherent in the old codes imported from China, and all integral parts of feudalism banished forever; the national wealth trebling and quadrupling, and population increasing at a rate unknown in any previous history of Japan, new worlds of thought entered and a new spirit possessing the people; while up and down the country were men and women from the West who without money and without price were giving their lives to the teaching and the healing of the people and to the benefit of their souls and bodies—that was the story of New Japan.

This was what the Korean patriots coveted for their own land; but, how to bring about in Korea what was already visible in Japan; that was the question. The peninsular state and people had not enjoyed that interior preparation which Japan, in the profound peace of two hundred and fifty years, without foreign invasion had secured. Korea had not the benefit of the genius of an Iyéyasū, who began the new era of art, science, literary culture and investition, whose flower and fruit we now behold. Most of all, Korea had not had the benefit of a settlement of Dutchmen, who for two hundred years kept on silently but surely leavening with their words and thoughts, their books and their sciences, their medicine and their trade, the great mass of men in hermit isolation. How then, could these Korean patriots bring about reform?

Who can blame the revolutionists of 1884 for being Koreans, for following the precedents of centuries, for doing only what seemed possible to do? Better, we may say, the slow processes of the missionary and the teacher; but even these, as well as all foreign ideas, were under ban. The time-honored Korean way of effecting a change in government was to form a plot, have the conspirators meet near the palace, seize the person of the king, cut off the heads of opposing ministers and then issue the edicts of reform in the royal name. Is not this, or dynamite, the standard method in every country without representative institutions, and where the popular voice is repressed? Had not the Japanese done the same in 1868? Did not a few daring spirits seize the person of the emperor, and institute reform in his name? So they read Japanese

precedent and history. Why should a Korean hesitate? Would not the means sanctify the end?

So, after drinking deeply at the Japanese spring, and seeing, also, the wonders of America and Europe; after the American treaty had been signed and American ships took eager pupils around the world, the cosmopolitan Koreans came home,—the wax to be melted and the clay to be hardened in the same fire. One or two of the pro-Chinese Koreans who had gone abroad came home more Asiatic and ultra-Confucian than ever, determined to keep Korea as it was. They branded western progress as barbarism, and looked upon Christianity as vastly inferior to Confucianism. On the other hand, the Progressives, fully converted to the ideas of Christendom,—whether we call those ideas collectively Christianity or civilization,—resolved to lose no opportunity. Pretty soon they saw, or imagined they saw, that the “irrepressible conflict,” already begun when the American treaty was signed, required that the fire should break out which should bake the clay of conservatism into unchangeable terra-cotta and melt the wax for fusion into new forms,—perhaps for utter destruction, perhaps to be moulded into the model of a new Korea that should come to perfection under the statesman’s art.

So, resolving to kill rather than to be killed, and following out in perfection of detail the true Korean and old Japanese programme, they set in motion that revolution of 1884 which seems to be the pivot of Korean modern history. The order of procedure was, first, incendiarism; then assassination, on the evening of the opening of the new post-office; then the meeting at the palace; the seizure of the king’s person; the decapitation of the opposing royal ministers; the revolutionary edicts changing the customs of ages with a stroke of the pen; the fraudulent use of Japanese troops; collision and bloodshed between the foreign military, with victory resting with the overwhelming force of Chinese; a reign of Anarchy, while the American flag flew over the only refuge for the foreigner in Seoul; the flight of the little handful of deceived Japanese in the light of their burning legation; the absconding of the conspirators, and, for a time the settling back of things as they were, with a tremendous increase of Chinese prestige and power.

For nine years the Japanese Government gave to the Korean refugee Kim Ok Kiun the same asylum and protection which, under the laws of civilization, it gives to all foreigners. Finally in April, 1894, having used Japan as a ground of their barbarous

plots, the Korean assassins in government pay succeeded in decoying Kim away to Shanghai, and murdered their victim. Then, China, approving such ancient barbarism, sent home the triumphant assassin, where he was rewarded with honors, money and fame, while the corpse of the Kim Ok Kiun was dismembered and publicly exposed. A Chinese war vessel acted under approval from Peking, for both purposes as common carrier and express agent.

Thus there were added fresh elements to precipitate the already impending collision, between western civilization as represented by Japan with all the glow and fierceness of a new convert, and Asiatic barbarism as represented by China with all the tenacity of an old believer who conscientiously shuts his eyes to new light. About the same time, in the southern Korean provinces, whether as a local uprising of the people against chronic and unspeakable oppressions, or as a party stimulated and fostered by the pro-Chinese faction at Court, the Tong Haks lifted up the banner of revolt. Then the ultra-Confucianists in Seoul asked of the Chinese government military aid. In eager violation of the treaty of 1885, China dispatched her soldiers first and notified Japan afterward.

This last ounce broke the Japanese camel's back. The murder of Kim Ok Kiun had fired the popular heart. The action of China exasperated the Government. Resolving not again to be caught napping or to be outnumbered, withal irritated at the overbearing behavior of the Chinese representative at Seoul for years past, knowing that China was massing her forces on the frontier and storing up Japanese coal for her steamers at Port Arthur, believing that Li Hung Chang wished to precipitate a war for his own purposes, realizing that the independence of Korea was a necessity for the peace of the East, Japan hesitated not for a moment to cast down the gage of battle. What were numbers and might and vast resources when Japan had her quarrel just and her war was for civilization? When in 1872 she changed her calendar,—the oriental symbol of sovereignty in the giver and dependence, if not vassalage, in the receiver,—from that of China to that of Christendom, she understood fully the reasons for the outburst of rage on the part of the Chinese and their insolent turbulence. Turning from the ideas, literature, law, civilization of China and Confucius to that of Christendom, she knew that some day China would present the bill and demand payment; but when the reckoning was demanded, Japan, though no more ready than David was, went out to meet the Goliath of Asia. With the light but efficient equip-

ment of genius, young Nippon had moved out to meet the giant in the coal-scuttle helmet and heavy armor of prehistoric tradition.

We know the sequel. The Mikado's minister Hoshi Toru was dispatched to Seoul to demand a categorical answer as to whether Korea was independent, while General Oshima—once a peasant boy in Japan—with his mixed brigade accompanied the envoy. A skirmish in front of the palace demonstrated the superiority of Japanese valour and the Murata rifle. A military cordon was formed around the Korean Capitol. At Asan the Chinese power received its first blow. On the water, a transport, the *Kow-shing*, was loaded with Chinese soldiers. These poor men, victims of ignorance, were so far behind the times as not to know that Japan had adopted the rules of modern civilization. They flatly refused to surrender, not knowing that kind treatment and abundant rations would be theirs. Hence, according to the laws of all warfare, as thus far known, the men with arms in their hands who refused to surrender, were given quick death. On September 17, at the great battle of Ping Yang, the Chinese military power in Korea was utterly broken. At the beginning of October Korea was free of her old oppressors, for not an organized body of Chinamen remained on the soil. At sea, Japanese seamanship, skill valour and science, and all the qualities reflected in the mirror of Dai Nippon, won the day over the heavier guns, the thicker armour and the larger floating fortresses of China. The rest of the story of the war, in which Japan has conquered a territory twice as large as her own, broken down the fortress-barriers of the sea-way to Peking, and in which she has showed how useless it is now, as always, to expect that the battle is always to the strong, or that Heaven is always on the side of the heaviest battalions, you know well.

Meanwhile, these are great days for Korea; they are days of reconstruction and reform. The old Chinese system of government and social procedure has received its death blow. Already, under that statesman of marvellous constructive abilities, educated in Europe, and a true child of New Japan, Count Inoüyé, true progress is being made. Beginning at the Capital, the king's palace is being cleared of eunuchs and an overgrown harem. The mighty mob of office holders and office seekers, ten times too large, is being lessened; appointment to office is to be according to ability and not on account of lineage. Provision has been made for a national army, navy, postal, railway, telegraph and light-house system. The ridiculous costumes and the methods of dress-

ing the hair are to be changed. The rigid sumptuary laws, heretofore obligatory, are to be repealed, and human beings are to have liberty in things little as well as in things great.

To sum up the reforms, without going into too much detail, we may say that the New Korea will rise according to the model of New Japan. The vast parasitic element will be removed. Those who preyed upon the body politic will become producers. They will have the magnificent privilege of earning their own living. Let us hope they will purchase for themselves a good degree. Every encouragement is to be given to the attainment of wealth, and every motive strengthened whereby industry may become habitual and general. Already we see in office the men whose abilities and acquaintance with the ideas dominant in the modern world fit them to be "builders of a better time." The exiles who have so long hidden in our country are now back in office and honour, and the future of Korea is bright.

Already, our own country, true to her polity of friendship that has in it no taint of the lust of conquest, has, both publicly and privately, played the part of kindness to Korea. Besides having the first foreign legation in Seoul, and accrediting as permanently resident the first Minister, it has had such representatives as Ensign Foulke, U. S. N., and Dr. H. N. Allen. A score or more of honoured missionaries, noble representatives of American culture and character, are already in Seoul and at the ports. Some of the most substantial buildings in the country are schools, hospitals and dispensaries—the gifts of American Christians—for the benefit of the Korean people. American missionaries, physicians and teachers were the first on the ground to heal and to enlighten. Already the best books on the language, the first churches organized, the first relief to the wounded in battle, and the first graves of the men who have sacrificed their lives in behalf of Korea, are of Americans, who outnumber all other religious and civilizing envoys from Christendom. Let us hope that as the Americans conquered Japan with peaceful armadas, unselfish diplomacy, and a whole army of missionaries and teachers, so also Korea will be likewise conquered by the people of that country, which President Arthur called the "Great Pacific Power." Further, may we not hope that in the settlement of the present war, the influence of the United States may, in the readjustment of the map of eastern Asia, be powerfully exerted to modify, if not to prevent, that scheme of systematic robbery of Asiatic people which has been so steadily proceeding during the centuries?